

what matters.™

# *Asset Based Community Development: A Practical Workshop - Building Community Connections and Partnerships that Really Work to Improve Lives*

**Arizona Early Childhood Summit  
April Scottsdale Resort and  
Conference Center  
21-23, 2008**

H. Daniels Duncan, ABCD Institute,  
United Way of Tucson and  
Southern Arizona

# *Hand, Head and Heart Exercise*



what matters.™

Pair up with a person you don't know very well. Take a few minutes to think about your assets and then take about five minutes each to share these assets with the other person in three realms of knowing.

**Hand** – Physical skills you possess that you would be willing to teach others. I.E., carpentry, photography, painting, bicycle repair...

**Head** – Knowledge that you have in a particular area like child development, health care, history of the neighborhood...

**Heart** – What are your passions; what stirs you to action; what would you walk across hot coals for?

# The Dilemma



People and Communities  
have *deficiencies & needs*

People and Communities have  
*skills and talents*

# *Asset Based Community Development*

*It is the capacities of local people  
and their associations that build  
powerful communities...*

*....in fact that is all that ever does*

*What can we do with what we already have?*

# *What is ABCD?*



what matters.™

- The belief that neighborhoods and communities are built by focusing on the strengths and capacities of the citizens and associations that call the community “home.”
- A place based/face based approach focusing on the assets of an identified geographic area.
- The belief that the assets of a community's institutions can be identified and mobilized to build community.
- A range of approaches and tools, such as asset mapping, that can put these beliefs into practice.

# *Community Building Approach*



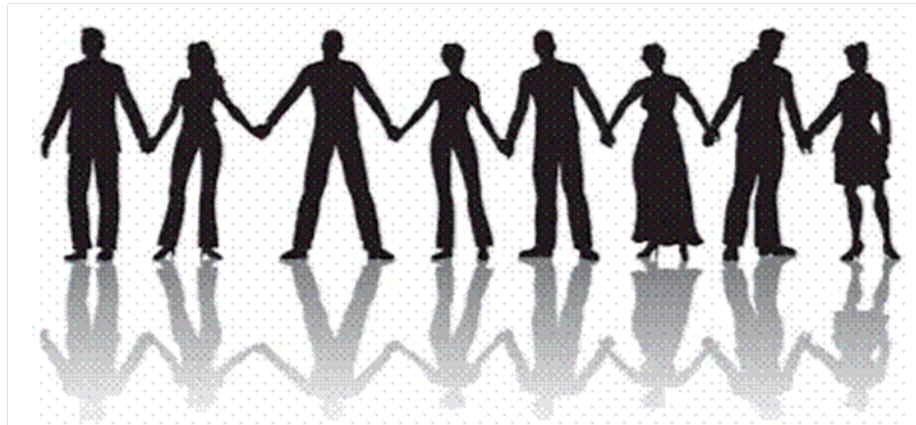
what matters.™

To help kids succeed

Children do well when their families do well,

And, families do better when they live in  
supportive neighborhoods and communities.

Everyone should have the opportunity to be a  
producer of their  
own and their communities well-being



It takes everyone to build a  
strong and safe community

# *The Role of Agencies*

The Role of Agencies and Programs should not be to just deliver services



The most effective role we can play is to work to remove barriers so that people have the opportunity to be a producer of their own and their community's well-being

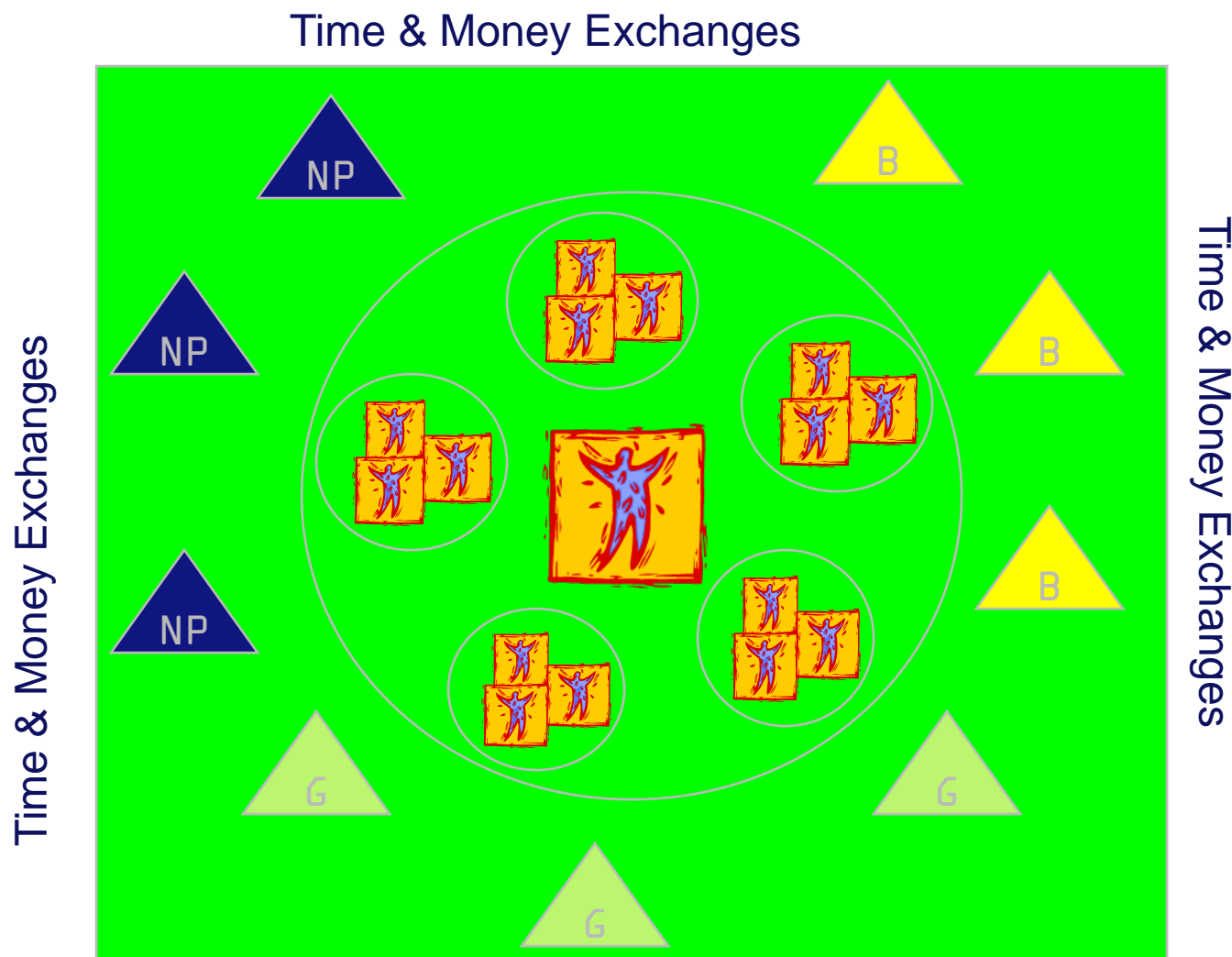
**To do this we must change our paradigm and look to all of the assets we have to offer**



# *Determinants of Health*

1. Personal behavior
2. Social relationships (networks of support)
3. Physical environment
4. Economic status
5. Access to health care

# Ingredients of a Healthy Community



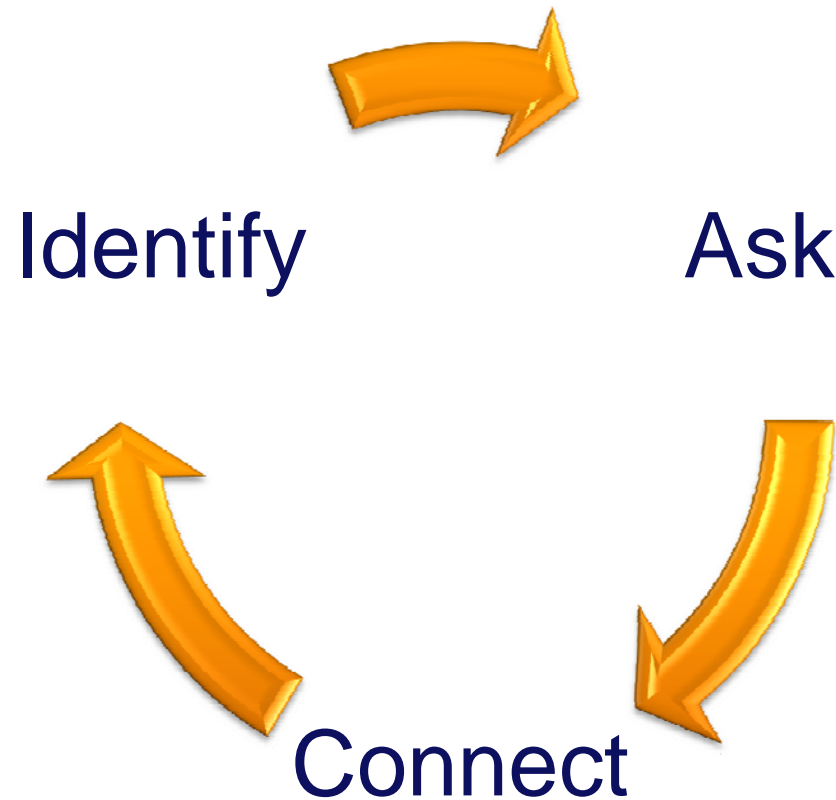
# *Effective Communities*



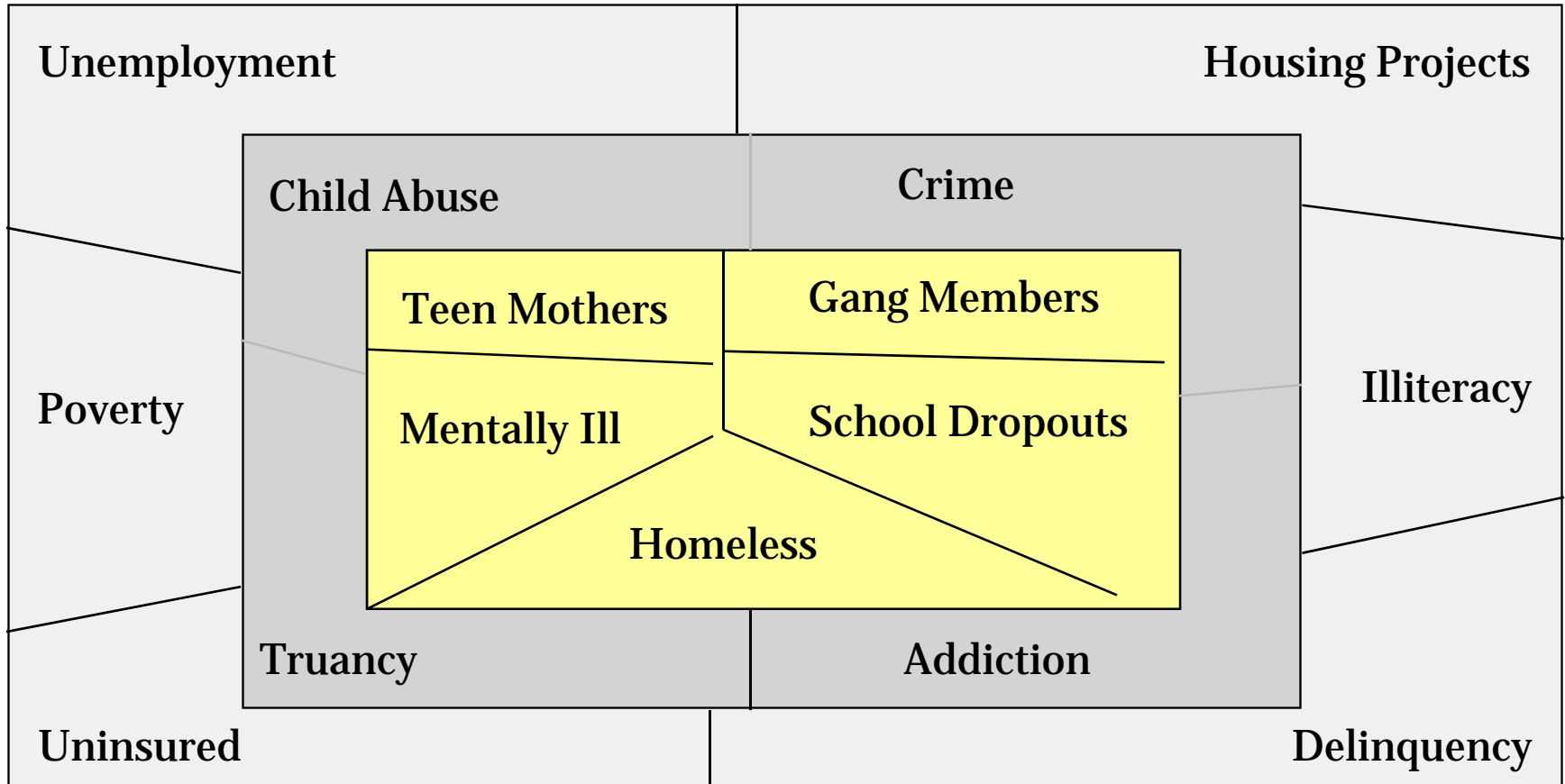
what matters.™

- Look inside first to solve problems
- Relationships are seen as power
- Have a good sense of assets and capacities, not just needs
- Leaders open doors
- Citizens are involved
- People take responsibility

# *The Three Acts of ABCD*



# *Needs Map: Community*



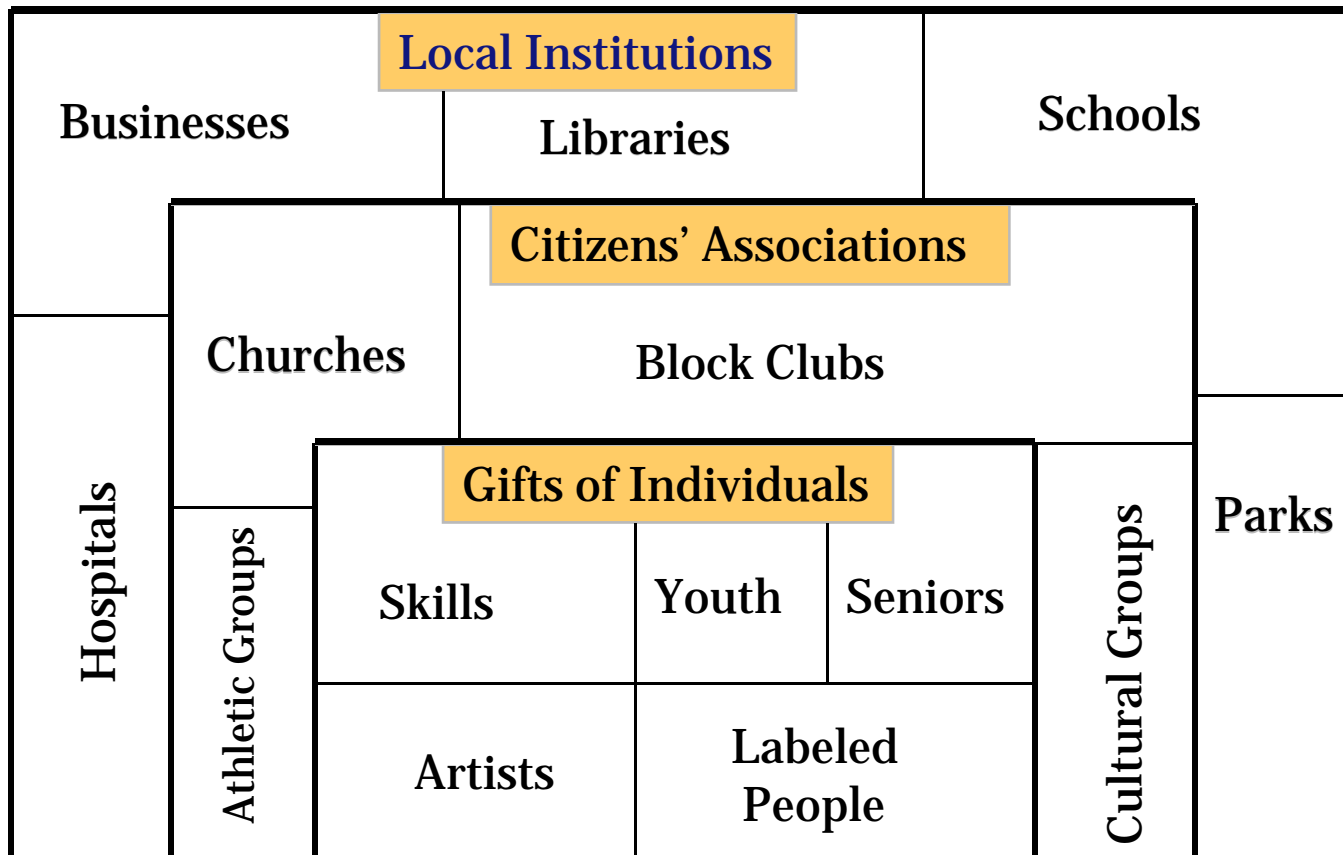
# *Consequences of the Power of the Needs Map*



what matters.™

- Internalizations of the “deficiencies” identified by local residents
- Destruction of social capital
- Reinforcement of narrow categorical funding flows
- Direction of funds toward professional helpers, not residents
- Focus on “leaders” who magnify deficiencies
- Rewards failure, produces dependency
- Creates hopelessness

# The Asset Map



# *Principles of Asset Mapping*

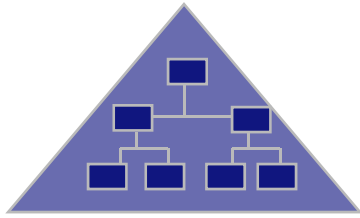
- Shift in Power!!!
- Inclusiveness – all people have gifts and talents
- Relationship building
- People, not programs build power in a community
- Welcoming the stranger
- Learning community atmosphere
- Place based
- Cooperative orientation



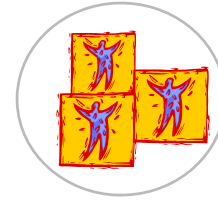


what matters.™

Strong People and Effective  
Programs – It takes both.



## *Two Tools*



Control



Produce a lot  
of the Same  
Thing



Need  
Consumers/  
Clients

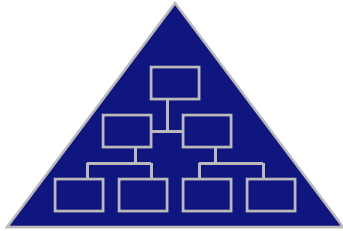
Consent/Choice/  
Voluntary



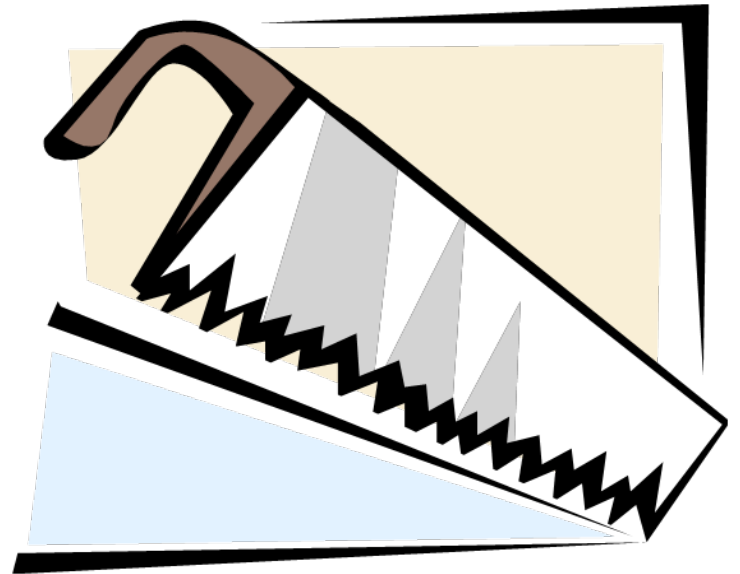
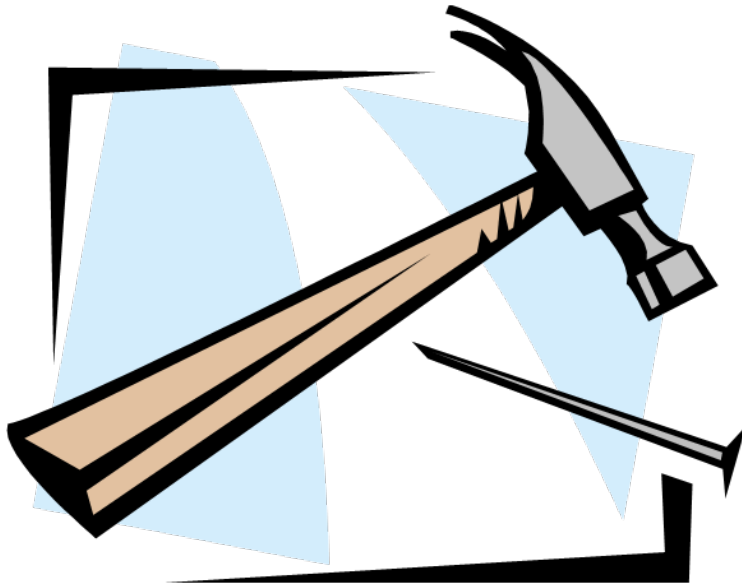
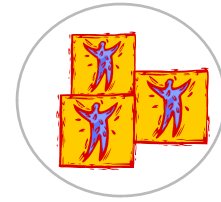
Produce  
Care



Create  
Engaged  
Residents



## *Two Tools*



We Need them Both to do the Right Jobs!!



what matters.™

# *Gifts of Individuals*

# *Why don't People Participate?*



what matters.™

- Not their agenda
- Transportation
- Child Care
- Schedule
- Attitude of the group (pessimistic/not welcoming)
- Lack of information
- Limited experience
- History of being ignored
- Resistant leaders
- Overcommitted
- Poor Organization
- History of unproductive meetings

# *How Do You Motivate People?*

## Focus on the gifts of their Heart





what matters.™

## *Gifts of Local Associations*

# *Types of Associations*



what matters.™

- Artistic
- Business
- Charitable
- Faith based
- Civic events
- Collectors groups
- Community support groups
- Elderly groups
- Ethnic and cultural groups
- Health and fitness groups
- Special interest groups
- Media and communications
- Self Help groups
- Neighborhood associations
- Block Watches
- Outdoor groups
- Environmental groups
- Political organizations
- School groups
- Social cause groups
- Sports leagues
- Study groups
- Survivors' groups
- Veterans' groups
- Women's groups



# *Power of Associations*



what matters.™

1. Effective in Action
2. Amplifier of Gifts
3. Creative
4. Reach large numbers

# *Gifts of Local Institutions*



what matters.™



# *Types of Institutions*

- Businesses
- Government
- Agencies

# *Institutional Assets*



what matters.™

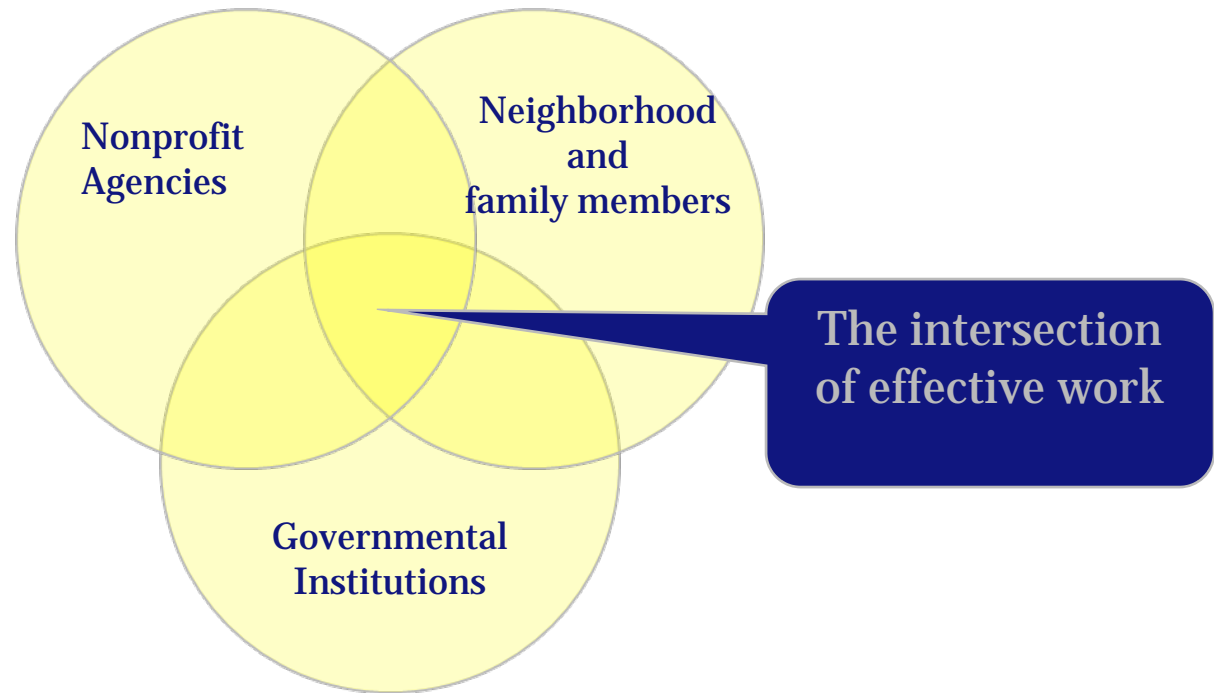
## More than an Institution's Products or Services

***“A neighborhood may not need an agency's hours of counseling, what they need is the agency's copy machine or meeting room or their staff's computer experience.”***

“Ask the neighborhood what they need...do not just tell them what services you offer.”

“Never do anything that nobody wants”

# *Effective Work*



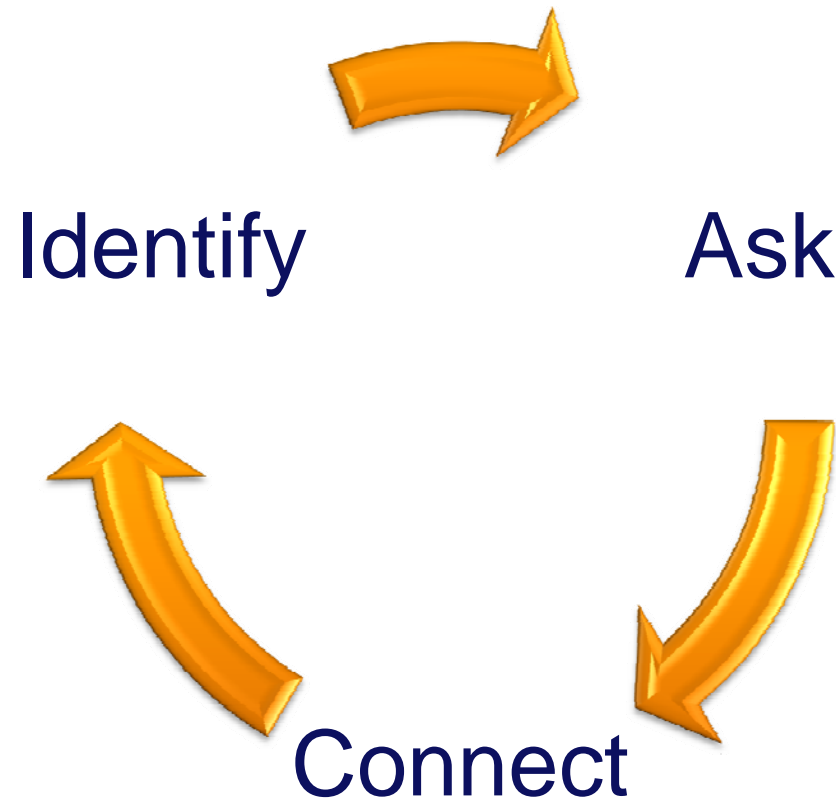
# *Twelve Guiding Principles for Community Development: ABCD in Action*



what matters.™

- Everyone has gifts
- Relationships build a community
- Citizens at the center
- Leaders involve others as active members of the community
- Everyone cares about something
- What they care about is their motivation to act
- Listening conversations
- Asking questions rather than giving answers invites stronger participation
- Ask, ask, ask
- A citizen centered organization is the key to community engagement
- Institutions have reached their limits in problem-solving
- Institutions as servants

# *The Three Acts of ABCD*





what matters.™

What do we do on Monday morning  
to be more effective in our work to help  
children start school ready to learn and  
succeed?



# *Community Building Competencies*



what matters.™

- Community Partnering
- Information Sharing
- Initiative
- Community Understanding
- Vision
- Empowerment and Influencing
- Conceptual Mapping
- Listening and Understanding

# *Community Building Principles*

- Participation and Inclusion
- Build Capacity – Focus on Assets
- Civic Responsibility
- Collaboration and Partnership
- Comprehensive
- Embrace Diversity
- Learn
- Focus on Results

# *The Right Path for Community Mobilization*



what matters.™

## Less Successful

Start with the Answer



Recruit People to  
implement the answer



Look for answers to the  
additional problem of “lack  
of motivation”

## More Successful

Start with Learning  
Conversations



Discover what people care  
about, how they see the  
situation, & what they want to  
offer



Mobilize Assets

How can we apply these principles to  
the work of our Regional  
Partnerships?

# *Lessons Learned from a Community Building Perspective*

- It can not be overstated that the long term success and sustainability of our work is dependent on strong active citizen involvement. The work of agencies and other institutions is to build strong communities through citizen involvement. It is the community's work to solve problems.
- We must develop and support effective citizen engagement and empowerment, helping all residents identify and share their "gifts".
- It is not just about money. It is not about funding, grants and allocations it is about strategically leveraging individual, neighborhood and community resources/assets.
- No one institution or group can solve today's problems alone, we must all work together.

# *To Order Additional Materials*



what matters.™

## **•Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Institute**

- School of Education and Social Policy
- Northwestern University
- 2120 Campus Drive
- Evanston, IL 60208
- Phone: 847.491.8711
- Fax: 847.467.4140
- Email: [abcd@northwestern.edu](mailto:abcd@northwestern.edu)

### *ACTA Publications*

5559 W. Howard Street  
Skokie, IL 60077

Phone: 847.676.2282

Toll Free: 800.397.2282

Fax: 800.397.0079

Email: [actapublications.com](mailto:actapublications.com)  
[www.actapublications.com](http://www.actapublications.com)

*For a complete list of our publications or to  
learn more about ABCD, please visit:*

[www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html)

Perhaps the most important contributor to a community's success is a belief in its abilities rather than in its problems.